

# Tidy Towns Competition 2008

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Ashbourne** Ref: **570**  
County: **Meath** Mark: **220**  
Category: **E** Date(s): **02/07/2008**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2008
Overall Development Approach	50	39
The Built Environment	50	32
Landscaping	50	32
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	15
Litter Control	50	26
Waste Minimisation	20	8
Tidiness	30	13
Residential Areas	40	28
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	20
General Impression	10	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>220</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Congratulations to the Ashbourne TidyTowns Committee for participating in the TidyTowns Competition 2008. Thank you for your submission and for your map. And a special 'Thank You' for going to the trouble of submitting your own personal map of Ashbourne. A hand drawn sketch of the town which highlights the places you regard as being most important for the TidyTowns Competition is the most appropriate map to meet the needs of the adjudicator. So next year use this year's map again and add in the highlights you wish the adjudicator to see. Well done also on your new 5 Year Plan, the content of which shows the original small town of Ashbourne coming to terms with its new built environment and its increased population, coping with the difficulties that have arisen, negotiating with those who are shaping your futures and enhancing what are now you spanking new surroundings. Your committee will be busy! Dividing your objectives into three categories seems to be a purposeful way of going about your work and, hopefully, will bring new people on board through the resident associations. You did not mention how you will fund your various projects. Having a timescale for each project will help you focus and prioritise. Hopefully with the increased population you will have added support now of like minded people who will bring a new vitality to the town. It is noted that you engage with all of the relevant authorities in Ashbourne, including the developers. Good luck. You say that you communicate with the community through newsletter. One would imagine that using the internet would be a useful tool in such modern environment as yours. The schools are a vital means of communication for you as it may be through the school that new residents become aware of you in the first instance. The kids are a natural asset when it comes to clean ups but they may be a valuable resource when it comes to tackling your graffiti epidemic. Well done for your participation in difficult times but times that are also full of possibility.

### **The Built Environment:**

This is a tale of two towns with two contrasting building styles which in time will cohabit peacefully and will become a case study for town planners studying the early years of urban development in the new Millennium in Ireland. The main street still retains its charm, helped to a major degree by the tree line. The Church still retains its reverence. As is traditional many business fronts are ablaze with summer flower colour. The committee have added the hanging baskets. There is no hint of the new era. The AIB, the Foxes Den, the Garda Station, the Ashbourne House Hotel and many others stand defiantly proclaiming their rich heritage and will not be bowed by the building mass that is the new town centre. Contrasting styles, two worlds, all in one parcel. Other buildings that have an important role in the life of Ashbourne are the Credit Union, a fine building and site but there is no excuse for the hoarding. The Community Health Services Building across the road looks a little jaded and the railings give the wrong impression. The new library is a beautiful example of building design in the modern age.

The impressive memorial to Ashbourne's contribution to the 1916 Rising will inform the newcomer of the heritage of this town. The stone to honour the Special Olympics will further inform the newcomer of the values of the inhabitants in this community. The GAA complex is a wonderful facility and hints at the All Ireland Club Final on St Patrick's Day sometime in the future. Ashbourne, though different, an exciting experience.

### **Landscaping:**

There is evidence of so much worthy work that has been done down the years in Ashbourne. Those landscaping projects are still of great value to your town. As an element in the construction of the many new estate and apartment blocks landscaping is now given high priority. The estate entrances are beautifully landscaped. All the while you are continuing your work independently of the developers. The entrances to older estates are also full of interest. It is a pity when beds are not tended to but with so much happening there may not be time for everything. Tree planting in the new estates is impressive.

### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

The river walk is a wonderful natural asset. Include it in next year's map as the adjudicator is not sure if he went on the designated walk or not. The Sli na Sláinte walk is a worthwhile project. There is very little reference to this section in your new 5 Year Plan. While it is understandable that you have many pressing priorities it would be a shame to ignore the possibilities that this section offers in the improvement of your environment. There may be people in your community who have an informed interest in wildlife and who would be willing to assist you with this section of the competition. When planning your landscaping projects keep in mind the welfare of birds and bees.

### **Litter Control:**

No doubt litter is a problem for you. In the modern new street there is a distance of the street without a bin. Other areas are well supplied. Back areas, which may be used for outdoor drinking, have to suffer from the can litter. Even in the estates there is some litter so the main problem for you is of an educational nature. Anti litter signs are frequent. The litter cleanups are a method of instilling good practice in the kids. Business litter cannot be tolerated. In your plans it is noted that you participate in the Meath Anti Litter League and you participate in an Taisce's Litter Spring Litter Clean Up. All commendable and all are battles in the war on litter.

### **Waste Minimisation:**

Well done on the ongoing work with the businesses in town. It could benefit your committee to study the booklet 'Race Against Waste'. It would stimulate new waste elimination projects for you. The emphasis in this section is not on litter control but on minimising waste in your community, reduce, reuse, recycle. The school can crusher is a typical example of waste minimisation at work.

### **Tidiness:**

The downside of development is that an area is inevitably untidy for a period. The advantage is that derelict sites, overground cables disappear and you can influence the image you wish to create for your town. Both are still true in your case. So much of Ashbourne is now immaculate but the work is ongoing. The advertising hoarding is a major problem but it is clear that it is an insulting eyesore to your committee also and figures frequently in your plans. Good luck with the removal process. The traffic is ever present and creates unease on the mainstreet. What you call redundant poles will meet their fate in time.

### **Residential Areas:**

Again a tale of two towns. The traditional residential environment of Ashbourne had many 'modern' bungalows and two stories. These houses exude pride of place and bring colour and design to their neighbourhoods. Then there are the estates that were built before the boom as in Maple Grove and Milltown estate. These estates are settled, have mature landscaping and seem to be wonderful places in which to live. And finally there are the modern developments. These new estates have a modern vibrant appearance, have welcoming entrances, are tastefully landscaped, have spacious open areas, their curving road systems create interest and variety and they are screened from the main roads in diverse ways. It all adds up to a pleasant residential area. One does feel for some of the houses because these fine buildings have been dwarfed by the mass alongside.

### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

It is not easy to create a welcoming, neat impression of your town when there is so much happening. One is bombarded by the advertising hoarding. Big business seems to possess an arrogance about proclaiming its wares. The sides of the roads are not as neat and manicured as one would wish. Although where the effort is made the verges help define your image. Private residences and the fronts of the new estates bring colour and interest to roads into town. One is struck by the fine railings in some estates. Roundabouts are full of potential that will brighten up the town in time. There are tracts of land awaiting building. These are not attractive for the moment. The retail park will in time be screened by lush foliage and the skyline will improve. One notices the urgings not to litter along the way as at Tudorgrove. It is difficult to stop on these roads and make notes because cars are in a hurry. Graffiti. So one has many varied feelings, sometimes reactions, when driving or walking around Ashbourne.

### **General Impression:**

One is overawed as the new mass of building unfolds. A visit to the new town centre is akin to visiting a new age Alice's Wonderland. And yet the original main street retains its character. But one senses that the native population have been through traumatic times. The big advantage for you is that you have spacious new estates and Grafton Street at home. One looks forward to seeing how the old and new gel and your committee's contribution to this organism.